

**Minutes**  
**Data Integrity Workgroup (DI)**  
Conference Call  
**Tuesday, July 18, 2017**  
**10:00 - 1:00**

Calendar Page: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/25079/>

**Announcements**

- Mid-Atlantic Stream Restoration Conference- Sept. 20-22, 2017, Baltimore, MD. Abstracts due Jan 31, 2017
- Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation – November 5-9, 2017. Providence, RI.
- Ninth Symposium on Harmful Algae in the U.S.- Training the Next Generation– Nov. 11-18, 2017, Baltimore, MD.
- Executive Council meeting occurred the beginning of June. Gov. Hogan was nominated as the new chair of the Executive Council.

**2017 Early Summer Hypoxia Updates**

**Michael**

NOAA and UMCES put out a 2017 summer forecast which called for a slightly worse than average hypoxia event based on Jan-May flow conditions of the tributaries of the Bay. The flows were slightly higher than average, delivering more nutrients to the Bay. Twice a month between June, July, and August between Maryland and Virginia. Bill Romano does the analysis of the results. The prediction so far is holding. The first July cruise has been completed.

There's a paper out on ecological forecasting. ACTION: Caroline can send this paper out to the group. UMCES has a website that explains this work as well. NOAA funded the forecast for the last two years, but after 2017, the forecasting will no longer be funded. Drew asked for a link to this paper.

**Comments on Final CBP Methods Manual**

**All**

The manual has been [posted online](#) and sent in the mail to labs and field offices.

**Tier 3 Citizens Monitoring Cooperative Discussion**

**Donovan**

- 2016 Audits - Nanticoke Watershed Alliance and BlueWater Baltimore
- 2017 Audits - My nominations for the next two audits
- Volunteers for doing the audits and audit reports - timeline for completion
- Update on other relevant CMC topics - Prioritization report, MTAC protocol, Data interpretation methods manual

Caroline Donovan provided an update on the CMC. Two audits were done, BWB and Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. The reports were written over the winter. NWA has been officially approved Tier 3, and their 2017 data can be used as Tier 3 data in the database. A press release was put forward in June regarding this

designation. Follow up will occur regarding their labs audited, and samples incorporated into the blind audit sampling. Blue water Baltimore's report is still in draft form, with recommendations that need to be discussed for BWB to implement. Kristen agreed that a meeting needs to be set to discuss the report's findings with BWB. Kristen asked to work with Caroline to help finish up this report. Once BWB addresses these issues, data can be uploaded as early as 2018.

Two audits are meant to occur every year under CMC. There are several groups that are currently at Tier 2 (Mid-shore Riverkeepers, Chester, Sassafras) that can be raised to Tier 3. There are a few groups that may possibly merge under one group that handle Choptank, Sassafras, among others. The boards of these groups are all on board for this merger. This merge will be official by January 1, 2018. The goal is to streamline their monitoring program, with only one audit needed (to be conducted after the merger).

The South River Federation and the West Road Riverkeeper are slated to have audits, but a lot less information is known about their programs currently. A meeting is scheduled with SRF to determine if their data is Tier 2, before looking into Tier 3 status. Caroline would like to schedule these audits in the fall, and are currently looking for volunteers to go on these audits. Caroline asked Durga if she can attend these audits or another representative from the CBP.

Cindy added that the Tiers in VA do not exactly match up with CMC. VA submits Tier 3 data to the CBP from citizens involved in the Alliance for the Bay.

Caroline continued that MTAC protocol (tidal) is the equivalent protocol to compare to CBP methods, but needs modification. Caroline committed to doing this modification and will possibly be able to present this procedure at the next DIWG meeting.

The CMC Prioritization Report has been published, to help illuminate state's priorities for volunteer monitoring data. The Data Explorer database is available for data upload. Benthic data upload will begin in the next few months. ACTION- Caroline will forward the link for this database so that all DIWG members could forward this information.

- Reviewing and aligning water quality sample program protocols for Tier 3 (regulatory support) dissolved oxygen profiles **Michael**
- Recommending stations to add
- Deciding on where to host the result

Bruce Michael reviewed sampling program protocols to help with spatial and temporal resolution. Matt Stover continued that there's about 730 stations where many are already collecting DO samples, and with coordination, this data could really work well with CBP work. These nontraditional stations could also be helpful to fill gaps of sampling already occurring.

Bruce asked if VA had a program for their shellfish monitoring. Cindy responded that a separate agency, the health department, handles shellfish monitoring. Cindy was unsure if this agency also monitored for DO. ACTION- Cindy agreed to look into this to confirm whether they monitor DO or not.

Bruce continued with the discussion of these nontraditional data additions, with questions of where this data could be stored. Bruce asked if this data is currently displayed on any website? Matt Stover added that for Maryland, the data is not stored publically, although this data IS available online. This effort will continue over the next month or so to view the data, the collection methods, and how to report it. This would be helpful to expand this effort into VA as well. This effort is spearheaded by Peter Tango and Matt Stover. If anyone would like to join this effort, contact either one of them.

If Betty or Cindy have any observations from the summer monitoring of the Bay, Bruce asks that they keep the DIWG informed. There was no knowledge of any large fish kills in VA or MD waters thus far this season.

#### Other Topics of Discussion

Nontidal network field audit- Doug Moyer asked if there was any discussion on continuing nontraditional monitoring of the nontidal network. Durga added that there is a review of SRBC comparison study. In terms of audits in the nontidal network, unsure how long it will be until others can occur. Doug added that the DIWG should take a solid role in comparing these two data sets in the comparison study. A field audit group should take on this audit process this year, which will feed into this comparison study. Bruce added that Elgin Perry, consultant of the CBP, has consulted on these comparison studies in the past. Doug agreed that it would be good to get Elgin's insight into this matter. Bruce concluded that a more formal presentation on this study should occur at the next DIWG meeting. Eglin could be invited to sit in this meeting. Doug confirmed that Joel Blomquist should lead this discussion, with Doug possibly assisting if need be.

Doug added that a field training and field audits will occur at VA DEQ to train new staff, hopefully occurring in the Fall 2017 (tentatively after the VA field audit in Oct. 2017). Doug Chambers added that a nontidal network team meeting would be helpful for nontidal collaboration- combine the state partners to review the sampling procedures. Doug agreed to put together an agenda for the nontidal meeting after the VA audit workshop. Durga will work with Doug on this agenda.

#### **USGS Reference Samples**

#### **Merritt**

Occoquan Lab- represented by Dongmei Wang- showed numbers that are consistently high in the reference samples. ACTION: Bruce added that we will need to reach out to them to let them know.

DCLS responded to a higher z score in the lower concentration in some of these USGS reference samples, and these numbers are within their limits.

### **Coordinated Split Sample Program**

- February Mainstem Results

**Mallonee**

Jay added that he's reviewing the sample where his lab is off for some of the split sample data (possibly due to pre-test contamination).

Mike added that Horn Point joined us for November sampling. However, they did not participate in the Feb or May sampling this year, but will possibly do so in August. Kristen Hyer confirmed that this is accurate and believed that it was a scheduling issue with staff.

Meg Maddox, representative of Horn Point lab, responded regarding participation of the Horn Point Lab- she will be talking with the director to confirm participation.

- March Tributary Results
- DHMH had higher numbers before, possibly an issue with processing, but no concerns were found. Mike confirmed that December and March have tight numbers. Jay added that, while he does not know DHMH's process, he believes a possibility may be the math hasn't been done on these numbers. ACTION: Mike will email DHMH to ask.

**Mallonee**

### **Blind Audit Report**

**Frank**

Final report for the last two rounds of FY17 for the Blind Audits. Blue Water Baltimore and the Appalachian Lab joined in this report. The next round will come out early September.

### **Conowingo Dam Update**

**Michael**

The dam has lost its trapping capacity, with nutrients going straight into the Bay. WQ Standards will not be met with this increased load, even if WIPs were fully implemented. Increased phosphorus BMPs are an option, but would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. If just the Susquehanna watershed states contributed to mitigating this load, it would be the most expensive option, costing \$485million per year extra through 2025. If instead, this load was divided along with VA and MD, the cost drops to about \$300 million extra per year. Finally, if ALL jurisdictions in the Bay, these added phosphorus BMPs would drop the cost to an extra \$82 million extra per year. Maryland is currently looking into a dredging demo project for late summer/early fall to help potentially offset BMP costs. Gov. Hogan will host a second Conowingo Summit in August to announce any possible options.

## Support for EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Budget

Michael

President Trump's budget would zero out the CBP budget. We do not anticipate a full zeroing of the budget however, due to state support. Maryland is looking at contingency plans to maintain funding regardless of federal support. There has been positive bipartisan feedback from representatives when USGS has discussed Bay science. We will not know until the end of September.

### Participants

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